



2026:CGHC:17451

AFR

**HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR**

**CRA No. 538 of 2005**

**Judgement Reserved On: 30.03.2026**

**Judgement Delivered On: 16.04.2026**

1. Milauram S/o Shri Puhupram Sahu, Aged About 52 Years R/o Village Patewa PS Ghumka, Tahsil and District Rajnandgaon (C.G.).
  2. Ramesh Kumar S/o Shri Melauram Sahu Aged About 21 Years R/o Village Patewa PS Ghumka, Tahsil and District Rajnandgaon (C.G.).
- ... Appellants**

**versus**

- The State Of Chhattisgarh
- ... Respondent**

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For Appellants : Mr. Pranav Tiwari, Advocate

For State : Mr. Anant Bajpai, Panel Lawyer

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**Hon'ble Shri Justice Narendra Kumar Vyas**

**CAV Judgment**

1. The appellants have filed present criminal appeal under Section 374(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code against judgment of conviction and order of sentence dated 25.06.2005 passed by learned Special Judge, Rajnandgaon in Special Case No. 116/2004 whereby the appellants have been convicted and sentenced in the following manner:-

<b>Conviction</b>	<b>Sentence</b>
Under Section 294 r/w Section 3(1)(r) of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989	: R.I. for six months and fine of Rs. 500/- in default of payment of fine further R.I. for three months to each of the appellants
Under Section 506(2) of I.P.C.	: R.I. for six months and fine of Rs. 500/- in default of fine R.I. for three months to appellant No. 1.

(Jail sentences are ordered to run concurrently).

2. The case of the prosecution, in brief, is that the complainant/victim lodged a written complaint in Police Station AJAK, Rajnandgaon stating therein that he belongs to Harijan community and upon construction of shop at Government land, a dispute arose between the victim and accused/appellants, the accused have abused him by caste, slapped him and also threatened to kill him. On the basis of complaint, FIR bearing Crime No. 10/2004 (Ex. P/4) has been registered by the Police Station, AJAK, Rajnandgaon on 16.10.2004 for commission of offence punishable under Sections 294, 323 506, 34 of IPC and Section 3(1)(r) of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (in short "Act of 1989").
3. After completion of investigation and collection of material, the prosecution has submitted the charge sheet before the Judicial Magistrate, Rajnandgaon and since the offence under Section 3(1)(r) of the Act of 1989 has also been registered, as such the case was sent for trial before the Special Judge (Atrocities), Rajnandgaon which was registered as Special Case No. 116/2004.
4. In order to bring home guilt of the appellants, the prosecution has examined as many as 6 witnesses namely- Sanjay Kumar Sahu (PW/1), Tirath Ram (complainant/victim) (PW/2), Manoj Kumar Sahu (PW/3), L.M. Mishra [Sub Inspector] (PW/4), Devendra Potai (PW/5) and Dr. Anil Mahakalkar (PW/6) and also exhibited documents namely written complaint of the incident (Ex. P/1), temporary caste certificate (Ex. P/2), property seizure memo (Ex. P/3), FIR (Ex. P/4), arrest/Court surrender memo of Milauram (Ex. P/5), arrest/Court surrender memo of Ramesh Kumar (Ex. P/6), incident site map (Ex. P/7) and medical examination report of Tirath (Ex. P/8).

5. Statements of accused/appellants have been recorded under Section 313 Cr.P.C., in which they have denied the allegations leveled against them and pleaded innocence and false implication. The accused abjured their guilt and to prove their innocence, they have exhibited documents namely statement of Sanjay Kumar (Ex. D/1) and statement of Manoj Kumar (Ex. D/2).
6. Learned trial Court after appreciating the evidence and material available on record, vide its judgment dated 25.06.2005 has held that appellants have committed the offences under Sections 294 and 506(2) of IPC and Section 3(1)(r) of the Act of 1989 and thereby convicted and sentenced them for the offences as mentioned in opening paragraph of the judgment. Being aggrieved and dissatisfied with the aforesaid judgment of conviction & order of sentence, instant criminal appeal has been preferred by the appellants challenging the same. This Court while admitting the instant appeal on 04.07.2005, has granted bail to the appellants and since then they are regularly appearing before the concerned trial Court.
7. Learned counsel for the appellants would submit that the appellants have been falsely implicated in this case and the trial Court has not appreciated the contradictions and omissions of the prosecution witnesses in its true perspective. He would further submit that material defect in framing of charges and examination of accused under Section 313 of Cr.P.C. have caused prejudice to defence and conviction on the same ground is bad-in-law. He would further submit that the caste of the complainant has been found proved, is incorrect as the caste certificate (Ex. P/2) was issued by the Tahsildar who was not a competent authority and the said certificate was a temporary certificate,

therefore, the certificate has no relevancy. He would further submit that as per judgment passed by Hon'ble the Supreme Court in the matter of **Ku. Madhuri Patil Vs. Addl. Commissioner, Tribal Development**, reported in **AIR 1995 SC 94**, the Tahsildar is not competent authority for issuance of caste certificate and in-fact the competent authority for this purpose, is Sub Divisional Officer (Revenue), as such conviction of the appellants under the Act of 1989 is illegal. It has also been contended that the prosecution is unable to prove the offence under Section 294 as well Section 506 of the IPC beyond reasonable doubt as the prosecution is unable to prove the ingredients to attract these Sections beyond reasonable doubt and would pray for allowing the appeal. To substantiate his submission, he would refer to the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in case of **Hitesh Verma Vs. the State of Uttarakhand & Anr.** in **Criminal Appeal No. 707 of 2020** dated **05.11.2020**.

8. On the other hand, learned counsel for the State would submit that the caste certificate issued by the Tahsildar is a valid document and the caste certificate has validly been proved by prosecution. He would further submit that the offence committed by the accused under Sections 294 and 506(2) of the IPC has also been proved by the prosecution, therefore, the order impugned does not suffer from any irregularity or infirmity warranting interference by this Court.
9. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the material available on record with utmost circumspection.
10. From the above submissions, the point emerged for determination by this Court is:-

“Whether the temporary caste certificate (Ex. P/2) issued by the Tahsildar is valid document or not to establish the caste of

the victim and whether the prosecution is able to prove the offence under Section 294 and 506(2) of the IPC beyond reasonable doubt?"

11. For better understanding, the issue raised in this appeal, it is expedient for this Court to examine relevant provisions of the Act of 1989 and the relevant provisions of Constitution of India, which are extracted below:-

**"Definition.-(1)** in this Act unless the context other wise requires-

**(c)** "Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes" Shall have the meaning assigned to them respectively' under clause (24) and clause (25) of article 366 of the constitution."

12. The provision of Section 3(1)(r) of the Act of 1989, is also required to be seen which is reproduced as under:-

**"3. Punishments for offences of atrocities.- (1)** whoever, not being a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe,-

(r) intentionally insults or intimidates with intent to humiliate a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe in any place within public view;"

13. In view of the provisions of law, it is apparent that if a person of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe who falls under Clause (24) and (25) of Article 366 of the Constitution of India is intentionally insulted or intimidated with intent to humiliate in any place within public view by not being the member of the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe then he shall be deemed to have committed the said offence, if proved.

Clause (24) and (25) of Article 366 specifies the definition of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe which are as under:-

**"366. Definitions.-** In this Constitution, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions have the meanings hereby respectively assigned to them, that is to say-

**(24)** "Scheduled Caste" means such Castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within such castes, races or tribes as are deemed under article 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the

purposes of this Constitution;

**(25)** "Scheduled Tribes" means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution."

14. From perusal of the Article 366 of the Constitution of India, it is clear that such castes, races or tribes or parts of groups will be deemed to be Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes who are within such castes, races or tribes as provided under Article 341 and 342 of Constitution of India. The Article 341 of the Constitution of India, makes it clear, that the President with respect to any State or Union territory and where it is a State after consultation with the Governor by public notification specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes shall be called to be the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union territory as the case may be. In the said context, it is required to be seen that the prosecution has to establish a case that the complainant belongs to a particular caste or parts of groups or races within the caste which falls within the notified Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes to prove the charge under Section 3(1)(r) of the Act of 1989.
15. In this respect, after going through the record, it can safely be observed that the prosecution has not submitted any caste certificate to prove that complainant belongs to scheduled caste community as the investigating officer has not filed any document to prove that the complainant belongs to Harijan caste which is Scheduled Caste. The victim was examined as PW-2 on 15.03.2005 and in his court statement he has stated that the appellants knowingly abused him by caste and also threatened to kill him when he objected it, the appellants have slapped him and chased with lathi. In the evidence, he

has exhibited the document (Ex. P/2) which is temporary undated caste certificate and the said document was valid for six months from the date of its issuance, as such it cannot be said to be legal document to prove the caste of the complainant. Thus, from the evidence, it cannot be safely held that merely saying by the complainant that he belongs to Harijan caste is not enough, it is required to be proved by cogent and unimpeachable evidence that the complainant falls within the caste, races or tribes or parts of groups notified as Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. In absence thereof, a caste certificate issued by competent authority ought to be produced by the prosecution discharging such burden, therefore, the offence as alleged under Section 3(1)(r) of the Act of 1989 has not been proved by the prosecution.

16. From perusal of Section 3 (1)(a) to (zc) of the Act of 1989, it is quite vivid that different act indicating commission of offence has been described and in every sub-Section, it has been made clear that the offence relating to atrocities by a member whoever not being a member of a Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes is punishable. In such circumstances, it is incumbent upon the prosecution to prove that the complainant belongs to Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes community and that the offender does not belong to Scheduled caste or Scheduled Tribes community, therefore, filing of valid caste certificate is sine-qua-non, as it is legal, unimpeachable evidence to prove the caste. In this regard, the Madhya Pradesh High Court in the case of **Bharat Singh Vs. State of M. P.** reported in **2006 (4) MPLJ 174** in paragraph 4 has held as under:-

“4. After hearing the learned counsel for the parties and perusing the entire record, this Court is of the considered

view that the conviction of the appellants is not sustainable because the prosecution has failed to establish by adducing cogent and reliable evidence that the complainant (PW01) Remeshwar belonged to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe community. In the Court Statement Rameshwar (PW-1) has deposed that he belongs to BALAI caste but no-where he has stated that his caste falls within the category of scheduled caste or scheduled Tribe. None of the prosecution witnesses has stated so though the appellants have admitted that the complainant belong to BALAI Community but that itself is not sufficient to establish that the complainant belonged to the scheduled caste community. Learned trial Court, without any evidence on record, has held in para 8 of the judgment that the complainant Rameshwar (PW-1) and Sobalsingh (PW-2) belong to the Scheduled caste community. The authority to prove that the caste of the complainant Rameshwar falls within the category of Scheduled Caste. Filing of caste certificate is sine-qua-non.”

17. In the case of **Jukum Singh Vs. State of M.P. 2003 (2) MPWN (79)**, it has been held that the victim must belong either to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe ought to be established by unimpeachable evidence. On failing to prove by the prosecution, the said charge cannot be found established.
18. Madhya Pradesh High Court in the case of **Tulsiram Vs. State of Madhya Pradesh** reported in **2012 C.L.R. (M.P.) 765** has held that the victim ought to have proved her caste by producing the caste certificate, mere oral evidence is not sufficient to assume that her caste covered under the act. Similarly, this Court in a recent judgment in the case of **Ashraf Khan Vs. State of Madhya Pradesh**, reported in **2013 Cr.L.J. (CG) 76** has observed that filing and proving the caste certificate is a *sine-qua-non* to prove the offence under the Act.
19. The Madhya Pradesh High Court again in the matter of **Ashok and Others Vs. State of M. P.** reported in **ILR (2015) MP 2475** has held at paragraph 13 which reads as under:-

“13. Similarly, when it is not proved that the offence

committed by the appellants was committed due to the caste of the complainant, therefore, only uttering the word "Chamra", it cannot be said that the appellants insulted the complainant on the basis of his caste. In this connection the judgment passed in the case of "Anil Kumar Pandey V. Daulat Prasad", [MMANU/MP/0181/2005: 2005(4) MPLJ 467] may be referred, in which it is held that if someone has been called by name of his caste without any intention to insult or humiliate a member of scheduled casts, then no offence under Section 3(1)(x) of the Special Act is made out. In the light of the aforesaid judgment, the trial Court has committed an error in convicting the appellants of offence under Section 3(1)(x) of the Special Act."

20. The procedure for issuance of caste certificate has been well prescribed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of **Ku. Madhuri Patil (supra)** which laid down the forum and procedure for issuance of assailing caste certificate and the status of candidate. Thus, in view of the aforesaid dictum of Hon'ble the Supreme Court, the aforesaid caste certificate has no evidentiary value, as it has not been issued by competent authority and the prosecution has failed to discharge his burden to prove the caste as discussed above. Apart from this, from the perusal of evidence available on record, it is evident that the appellants have not abused the complainants in filthy language knowing that he belongs to Scheduled Caste Community, as such no offence under Section 3 (1)(r) of the Act of 1989 is made out as held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in case of **Shajan Skaria Vs. State of Kerala** in **Criminal Appeal No. 2622 of 2024 dated 23.08.2024** in paragraphs 61, 62 and 80 has held as under:

"61. The words "with intent to humiliate" as they appear in the text of Section 3(1)(r) of the Act, 1989 are inextricably linked to the caste identity of the person who is subjected to intentional insult or intimidation. Not every intentional insult or intimidation of a member of a SC/ST community will result into a feeling of caste-based humiliation. It is only in those cases where the intentional insult or intimidation takes place either due to the prevailing practice of untouchability or to reinforce the historically entrenched ideas like the superiority

of the "upper castes" over the "lower castes/untouchables", the notions of 'purity' and 'pollution', etc. that it could be said to be an insult or intimidation of the type envisaged by the Act, 1989.

62. We would like to refer to the observations of this Court in Ram Krishna Balothia (supra) to further elaborate upon the idea of "humiliation" as it has been used under the Act, 1989. It was observed in the said case that the offences enumerated under the Act, 1989 belong to a separate category as they arise from the practice of 'untouchability' and thus the Parliament was competent to enact special laws treating such offences and offenders as belonging to a separate category. Referring to the Statements of Objects and Purposes of the Act, 1989 it was observed by this Court that the object behind the introduction of the Act, 1989 was to afford statutory protection to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, who were terrorised and subjected to humiliation and indignations upon assertion of their civil rights and resistance to the practice of untouchability. For this reason, mere fact that the person subjected to insult or intimidation belongs to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe would not attract the offence under Section 3(1)(r) unless it was the intention of the accused to subject the concerned person to caste-based humiliation.

80. At the cost of repetition, the words in Section 3(1)(r) of the Act, 1989 are altogether different. Mere knowledge of the fact that the victim is a member of the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe is not sufficient to attract Section 3(1)(r) of the Act, 1989. As discussed earlier, the offence must have been committed against the person on the ground or for the reason that such person is a member of Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe. When we are considering whether prima facie materials exist, warranting arrest of the appellant, there is nothing to indicate that the allegations/statements alleged to have been made by the appellant were for the reason that the complainant is a member of a Scheduled Caste."

21. Considering the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, evidence and material on record, it is quite vivid that the prosecution has failed to prove the caste of the victim and the offence has been committed by the appellant knowing that the victim belongs to Schedule Caste beyond reasonable doubt, therefore, the conviction of the appellants for commission of offence under Section 3(1)(r) of the Act of 1989 and imposition of fine, is set aside and the appellants are acquitted from this charge.
22. So far as offence under Section 294 of IPC is concerned, it is

expedient for the prosecution to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the obscene act has been committed by the appellants by using words in or in near public place. The obscenity has not been defined in IPC but it is always subject matter of examination before Hon'ble the Supreme Court. Hon'ble Supreme Court in case of **Director General, Directorate General of Doordarshan v. Anand Patwardhan** reported in **2006 8 SCC 433** has held paragraphs 30 & 32 as under:-

"30. The Encyclopedia definition of obscenity states, 'By English law it is an indictable misdemeanor to show an obscene exhibition or to publish any obscene matter, whether it be writing or by pictures, effigy or otherwise.' The precise meaning of "obscene" is, however, decidedly ambiguous. It has been defined as something offensive to modesty or decency, or expressing or suggesting unchaste or lustful ideas or being impure, indecent or lewd".

32. Therefore, one can observe that, the basic guidelines for the tier of fact must be:

- (a) whether " the average person, applying contemporary community standards" would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest.;
- (b) whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law; and
- (c) whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic political, or scientific value."

23. Again Hon'ble the Supreme Court in case of **Apoorva Arora and Another Vs. State (Government of NCT of Delhi and Another)** reported in **(2024) 6 SCC 181** has held in paragraph 41 as under:-

"41. The specific material which the High Court found to be obscene i.e. that which tends to deprave and corrupt impressionable minds, was "foul, indecent and profane" language. Nothing more. The High Court has equated profanities and vulgarity with obscenity, without undertaking a proper or detailed analysis into how such language, by itself, could be sexual, lascivious, prurient, or depraving and corrupting. It is well established from the precedents cited that vulgarity and profanities do not per se amount to obscenity. While a person may find vulgar and expletive-filled

language to be distasteful, unpalatable, uncivil, and improper, that by itself is not sufficient to be "obscene". Obscenity relates to material that arouses sexual and lustful thoughts, which is not at all the effect of the abusive language or profanities that have been employed in the episode. Rather, such language may evoke disgust, revulsion, or shock. The reality of the High Court's finding is that once it found the language to be profane and vulgar, it has in fact moved away from the requirements of obscenity under Section 67 of the IT Act. The High Court failed to notice the inherent contradiction in its conclusions."

24. From the abovestated legal position and considering Section 294 of IPC, it is quite vivid that anyone does any obscene act in public place or things, recites or utter any obscene songs, ballad or words, in or near public place, will be convicted under this Section. From evidence of the victim and other prosecution witnesses namely Sanjay Kumar Sahu (PW/1) and Manoj Kumar Sahu (PW/3) who have clearly deposed that the appellants have abused the victim by using filthy language which relates to arouse sexual and lustful words and there is no effective cross-examination on this point to rebut the same, thus, the appellants have been rightly convicted for commission of offence under Section 294 of IPC as the prosecution has proved its case for commission of offence under Section 294 of IPC beyond reasonable doubt.
25. Learned trial Court after appreciating the evidence and material on record has held that the appellants are liable for conviction under Section 294 of I.P.C. which is legal, justified and in accordance with law laid down by Hon'ble the Supreme Court as aforestated. Thus, this Court is of the firm view that the offence under Section 294 of the IPC is made out against the appellants, therefore, the conviction of the appellants under Section 294 of IPC is hereby affirmed. It has been informed by learned counsel for the appellants that the appellants

remained in jail for 1 day from 18.11.2004 to 19.11.2004 and the fine amount has already been deposited by the appellants while granting bail by this Court on this factual foundation. Learned counsel for the appellants would pray for reduction of the sentence already undergone for commission of offence under Section 294 of IPC by contending that the incident took place on 03.07.2004 and more than 21 years have been lapsed and the appellants during trial remained in jail for one day and after getting bail from this Court, they have not misused the liberty granted to them.

26. Considering the submission and the fact that now the appellant No. 1 is 73 years and appellant No. 2 is now 43 years and at the time of incident the appellant No. 2 was of young age of 23 years, therefore, it is not desirable for this Court to send the appellants again for incarceration, therefore, I am of the view that the sentence of six months awarded to the appellants for commission of offence under Section 294 of IPC is reduced to the period already undergone by the appellant by enhancing the fine amount from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 2,000/- each. The difference of fine amount i.e. Rs. 1,500/- has to be deposited by each of the appellants within eight weeks before the trial Court from the date of judgment and the same will be disbursed to the victim as victim's compensation as per Section 357 of Cr.P.C. (Section 395 of BNSS, 2023) within further four weeks from date of depositing of fine amount by the appellants.
27. From bare perusal of Section 506 of IPC, it is quite vivid that this section provides punishment for criminal intimidation which has been defined in Section 503 of IPC and from perusal of Section 503 of IPC for establishing offence under Section 503 it must be shown that (1)

Threatening a person with any injury; (i) to his person, reputation or property; or (ii) to the person, or reputation of anyone in whom that person is interested. (2) Such threat must be intentional; (i) to cause alarm to that person; or (ii) to cause that person to do any act which he is not legally bound to do as the means of avoiding the execution of such threat; or (iii) to cause that person to omit to do any act which that person is legally entitled to do as the means of avoiding the execution of such threat. These essential ingredients has to be proved by the prosecution beyond reasonable doubt by placing material and evidence to demonstrate intention, mere statement without intention to commit offence would not attract the offence under Section 506 (2) of IPC.

28. So far as offence under Section 506(2) of IPC is concerned, from bare perusal of evidence wherein the complainant (PW/2) has nowhere deposed in the evidence or placed the material on record before the trial Court that accused with intention to cause alarm or compel doing/abstaining has abused the complainant. Mere utterances of words are not sufficient for successful conviction under Section 506 of IPC as held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in case of **Parminder Kaur vs. State of Punjab** reported in **2020 (8) SCC 811**. Again in case of **Sharif Ahmed vs. State of U.P. reported in 2024 (14) SCC 122**, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held as under:

“49. This Court in *Manik Taneja and Another v. State of Karnataka and Another*<sup>26</sup>, had referred to Section 506 which prescribes punishment for the offence of ‘criminal intimidation’ as defined in Section 503 of the IPC, to observe that the offence under Section 503 requires that there must be an act of threatening another person with causing an injury to his person, reputation or property, or to the person or reputation of any one in whom that person is interested. This threat must be with the intent to cause alarm to the person threatened or to do any act which he is not legally bound to do, or omit to do

an act which he is entitled to do. Mere expression of any words without any intent to cause alarm would not be sufficient to bring home an offence under Section 506 of the IPC. The material and evidence must be placed on record to show that the threat was made with an intent to cause alarm to the complainant, or to cause them to do, or omit to do an act. Considering the statutory mandate, offence under Section 506 is not shown even if we accept the allegation as correct.

50. In view of the aforesaid position, we quash the chargesheet and the summoning order. The appellants are discharged. We clarify that the observations made above will have no bearing on the civil proceedings, if any, already initiated or which may be initiated in future by the respondent/complainant.”

29. Thus, it is quite vivid that the prosecution is unable to prove that the appellants have committed the offence under Section 506(2) of the IPC, therefore, their conviction under Section 506(2) of IPC is liable to be set aside by this Court and accordingly it is set aside.
30. Accordingly, the criminal appeal is partly allowed by setting aside the conviction of the appellants under Section 3(1)(r) of the Act of 1989 as well as Section 506(2) of IPC, but their conviction under Section 294 of IPC is affirmed by reducing the sentence to the period already undergone by the appellants and enhancing the fine amount to the tune of Rs. 2,000/- each and the difference of fine amount is Rs. 1,500/- is to be deposited by each of the appellants as directed by this Court in foregoing paragraph.
31. The appellants are reported to be on bail. Their bail bonds shall continue for a further period of six months from today in view of Section 437-A of Cr.P.C. (Section 484 of BNSS, 2023).

**Sd/-**

**(Narendra Kumar Vyas)  
Judge**